



Peace and Disarmament Education Survey 2014

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Executive Summary

This report serves as a baseline study for UNRCPD's peace and disarmament education (PDE) project and identifies further needs that can be addressed by the programme in the future. During May and June 2014, UNRCPD, together with the Comparative Education Society of Nepal (CESON), surveyed 1,000 students from 25 schools in five districts to assess children's ways of dealing with conflict and violence. The goal was to create a baseline against which UNRCPD would be able to measure the future impact of its PDE teaching materials and projects. To complete this cycle, UNRCPD plans to carry out a follow-up survey in 2015 to assess the impact of the current project.

Ten years after the end of the civil conflict, its consequences are still being felt, and violence in Nepal's government schools is widespread. The findings of the survey show that although students have developed different mechanisms to deal with conflict, non-violent approaches still need to be taught to manage conflict for both students and teachers. Crucially, preliminary findings also indicate that peace and disarmament education delivered in schools under the national curriculum would be a very effective way to address the pervasiveness of violence.

Major findings include:

- **Interpersonal violence¹ is still widespread in Nepal** but varies between schools. It usually happens between children or children and adults that know each other. Between May 2013 and May 2014, 72% of the students reported being **victims of non-physical violence²**, and 23% stated that they experienced **physical violence, including attacks with weapons**. During the same period, 70% were **perpetrators of non-physical violence** and 23% admitted that they used **physical violence** against others. Despite the widespread use of violence in Nepal, survey responses indicated a short duration of conflicts.
- Among the top **reported drivers of conflict**, students said they were motivated to use violence to **prove their 'power', get attention, protect others, get revenge and inflict punishment**. Some asserted that they simply had difficulties controlling themselves.
- The survey finds that **most students lack proper skills to deal with interpersonal violence**. Although the majority of the students employ non-violent methods in reaction to violence, these methods do not employ formal conflict management skills and are often used alongside violent approaches. Only about 25% of the students were familiar with formal negotiation and mediation skills.
- While **boys** are both the **majority of victims and perpetrators of physical violence**, **girls** reported more often being **victims and perpetrators of non-physical violence**.
- Students ranked **school education** (i.e. lessons and activities) as **highly influential on their behaviour** when dealing with conflict.

¹ Interpersonal violence refers to violence between individuals or between different groups of individuals. We are using this term here to define violence between students as well as students and teachers.

² Physical violence refers to the deliberate use of physical force with the potential for causing harm and can include the use of weapons. Non-physical violence includes acts that result from a power relationship, including threats and intimidation, verbal aggression, neglect or acts of omission.

Acknowledgment – Research Team

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Background

Nepal's class, ethnic and caste divisions provided fertile ground for the tensions which erupted during Nepal's ten year civil war (1996 – 2006) and cost over 13,000 lives. Students and teachers were not spared from the conflict, and in fact became targets for parties to the conflict that sought to spread their ideologies and even use schools as shelters.³ The political settlement led to a decrease in violence overall⁴, and schools were declared 'zone[s] of peace', unable to be used for or influenced by any political activity⁵. However, latent tensions continue to surface around exclusion and interpersonal conflicts.⁶

Peace and Disarmament Education (PDE) constitutes that part of Nepal's national education system which is aimed at addressing and combating violence and its underlying causes. The national School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) 2009/10 – 2015/16 is in this sense 'a response to multiple realities, underpinning the agenda for transformation and development for immediate and long-term perspectives'⁷ and has also repeatedly been viewed as 'a peace dividend'.⁸ The SSRP addresses not only the needs of students but also mentions that teachers' qualification should include 'skills to negotiate peace and reconciliation'.⁹

UNRCPD's Contribution to Peace Education

In 2013 UNRCPD launched a PDE project in Nepal to support the Nepali government's efforts to deliver peace and disarmament via the national curriculum. UNRCPD's project has helped the Ministry of Education's Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) develop a PDE model curriculum, provided technical assistance to integrate PDE into national grade 8 textbooks, and to include PDE under national grade 9 and 10 curricula. PDE specific lessons and activities were integrated into four different subjects: social studies, moral education, Nepali and English language. At the time of writing, grade 8 textbooks have been piloted in a sample of Nepal's government schools and will be reviewed by the end of 2014.

Scope and objectives of the study

The primary purpose of this study was to isolate and quantify the impact of integrated PDE teaching materials on students' knowledge, skills and behaviour. Focusing on grade 7 students who will be exposed to the newly revised grade 8 textbooks (including PDE contents) next year, the study analysed students' knowledge on peace and disarmament as well as their behaviour and skills in response to conflict prior to our intervention. By mapping the different forms of violence that occur in Nepal's schools at an interpersonal level and analysing students' reactions to it, the study also helped to further identify needs that can be addressed by the programme in the future.

³ Van Wessel, Margit and van Hirtum, Ruud (2013). Schools as tactical targets in conflict. What the case of Nepal can teach us. *Comparative Education Review*, v (57) n (1), University of Chicago Press.

⁴ Racovita, Mihaela, Murray, Ryan and Sharma, Subhindra (2013). In Search of Lasting Security, an Assessment of Armed Violence in Nepal. Small Arms Survey, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, p26.

⁵ Nepal's School Sector Reform Plan (2009 – 2015) (2009). Ministry of Education, Government of Nepal, p. 87.

⁶ Racovita, Mihaela, Murray, Ryan and Sharma, Subhindra (2013). *Op.cit.* pp. 29, 50-51.

⁷ Nepal's School Sector Reform Plan (2009 – 2015) (2009). *Op.cit.* p. 3.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 3.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 96.

Methodology

In consultation with external peace and disarmament experts, UNRCPD and the Comparative Education Society of Nepal (CESON) carried out a baseline study in May and June 2014. The aim was to investigate children's knowledge and behaviour in relation to conflict as well as to use the collected data as a baseline for UNRCPD's PDE project. The collection of pre- and post-intervention data allows the Centre to measure the impact it is having on children's attitudes, knowledge and behaviour, and to assess non-violent behaviour in response to conflict.

The survey was carried out among 1000 students from 25 schools and covered 5 districts, targeting students in grades 7. The sampling design consisted of a random selection of schools ensuring Nepal's diversity in terms of religion, geography, caste and gender¹⁰, employing a confidence level of 97%. Grade 7 students aged between 10 and 18 (the majority were between 12 – 14) responded anonymously to the questionnaire, which was delivered in Nepali. Following a pilot exercise by UNRCPD, field work was conducted by CESON between May and June 2014 and data was processed using SPSS, to ensure consistency and provide quality checks.

Data was supplemented by focus group discussions with teachers and parents in different districts, as well as classroom observations. Seven focus group discussions - three with parents and four with teachers were organised in four districts: Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur and Kavre and involved a total of 24 social study and moral education teachers (eight women and 16 men) and 18 parents (11 mothers and seven fathers). Non-participatory classroom observations in five schools from five different districts complemented the data.



Figure 1: Selected Districts

¹⁰ Lalitpur covers Newar and Tamang, as well as a semi urban population; Rasuwa represents a mountain district; Banke has a large Muslim and Madeshi population; Sunsari has a large number of Terai Dalit (the most marginalised people in Nepal); Doti represents the far western hills with a significant number of hill Dalit as well as poor Brahmin/Chhetri.

Findings

Post-conflict peace is often very fragile and many so called 'post-conflict' countries are affected by repeated cycles of violence¹¹. Despite the signing of the peace agreement in 2006, Nepal is, as in many post-conflict settings, still facing incidents of violence¹².

For this study, 1000 students were asked to fill in a questionnaire that has provided us with information regarding their ways to deal with violence. To better analyse the collected data, violence was classified according to its physical and non-physical nature. Physical violence refers to the deliberate use of physical force with the potential for causing harm. It includes scratching, biting, pushing, shoving, throwing, grabbing, choking, shaking, hair-pulling, slapping, punching and hitting. Physical violence as used in this paper can also include the use of a weapon (gun, knife, or another object). Non-physical violence includes acts that result from a power relationship, including threats and intimidation, verbal aggression, neglect or acts of omission. Many forms of non-physical violence can result in physical, psychological and social problems that do not necessarily lead to injury, disability or death. These consequences can be immediate, as well as latent, and can last for years after the initial abuse.

Violence is still widespread in schools

Field research revealed that, 10 years after the end of the civil war, interpersonal violence (violence between students or students and adults) is still a prevalent phenomenon in Nepal's government schools. Out of the consulted students, 33% indicated that in the previous six months prior to the survey they were physically or non-physically attacked by either classmates or friends in their neighbourhood. This shows that victims and their attackers usually know each other.

Over a period of 12 months, 72% of the students were victims of non-physical violence, whereas 23% stated that they experienced physical violence, in some cases including the use of weapons. Half of the students reported that they have attacked others within the last month by pressuring, discriminating, abusing, exploiting, and harassing them. Findings demonstrated that over a period of a year, 70% of the students were committing non-physical violence, while 23% of the students were perpetrators of physical violence. Many students reported being victims as well as perpetrators of both physical and non-physical violence.

With regard to geographical distribution, the survey did not find any clear pattern or relationship between different levels of violence and children's attitudes and behaviours towards conflict resolution across the five different districts targeted for the study.

¹¹ See for example: Collier, Paul, Hoeffler, Anke and Söderbom, Måns (2008). Post Conflict Risk. *Journal of Peace Research*, v (45) n(4), 461-478 and Geneva Declaration (2008). *Armed Violence After War: Categories, Causes, and Consequences*. Chapter Three.

¹² Racovita, Mihaela (2013). *At War's End: Armed Violence in Nepal*. Small Arms Survey Research Notes, n(29).

Victims of physical and non-physical violence

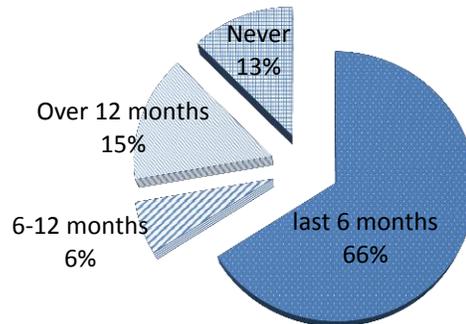


Figure 2: When was the last time you felt physically or verbally attacked by someone else in your peer group? (E.g. classmates at school, neighbourhood friends, etc.)

In the last three months, have you been involved in any of the following?

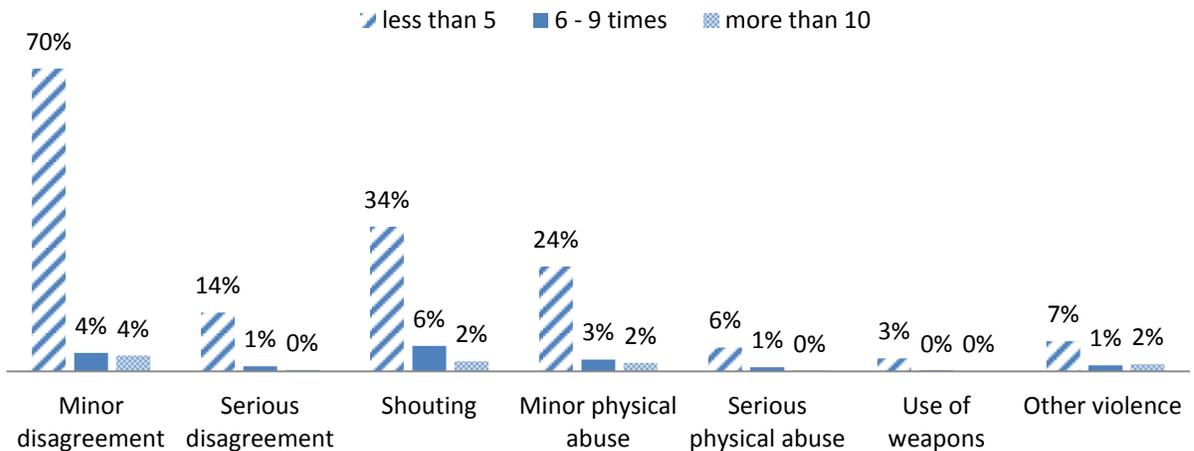


Figure 3: Conflict frequency

This chart shows that, although the majority of the students reported some minor disagreements, shouting, and physical abuse, the number of these cases remains low. Focus group discussions with teachers confirmed that there is widespread physical and non-physical violence in schools which varied by schools and community. Teachers also pointed out that in many cases, disputes and conflicts did not stop at the walls of the school's premises but spilled over to communities and involved students' parents.

Research further unveiled that most conflicts were of short duration; they were either resolved immediately (55%) or within a few months. Twenty-two per cent of cases lasted for up to 3 months, 16% of the cases were resolved within 9 months, and only 4% took more than a year or were not resolved at all. Current relations with present or past rivals were ranked very positively. Overall, in the majority of the cases, students reported that their relations with former and current opponents have improved (59%).

Victims and Perpetrators: A cycle of violence

In many cases it was very difficult to draw the line between victims and perpetrators as many students reported being both. Available past research describes violence as a cyclical pattern and suggests that experiencing abuse and neglect increases the likelihood of an individual to engage in violent behaviour and at the same time increases the risk of further victimisation.¹³ Our findings showed that in 7% of the cases, participants mentioned that they were both victims of physical violence as well as perpetrators of physical violence, while 53% of the students were both victims and perpetrators of non-physical violence.

Victims and perpetrators of violence

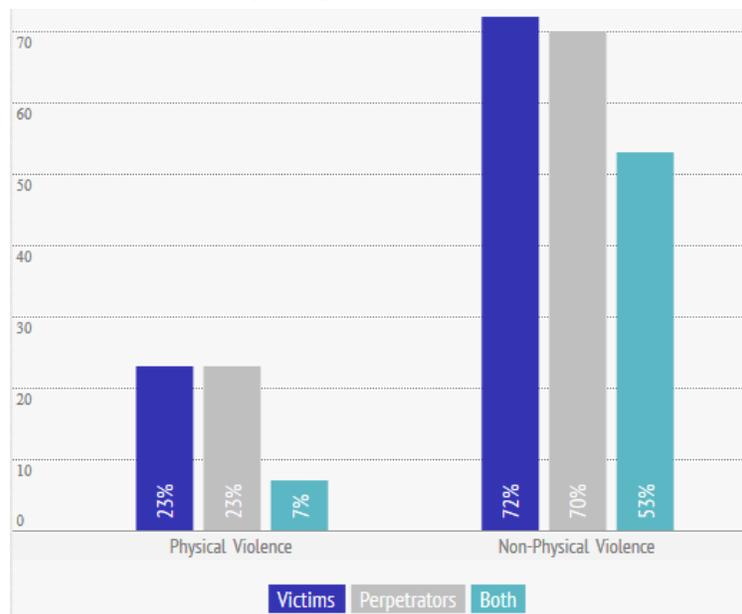


Figure 4: Exposure to violence increases the likelihood of further victimisation as well as engaging in violent behaviour

¹³ World Health Organisation (2007). The cycles of violence: The relationship between childhood maltreatment and the risk of later becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence. Violence and Injury Prevention Programme WHO Regional Office for Europe, p. 9.

Profiling students

Students' self-reported profiles revealed some information on their attitudes and behaviour in relation to conflict and violence. According to our survey, 25% per cent of the students positioned themselves as leaders, 34% as equal to others and 44% would say that they are followers. At a first glance, students' self-reported classifications showed little to no relation between their profile and the likelihood of being a victim of physical or non-physical violence. 'Leaders', 'followers' and those who saw themselves as equals with others all experienced the same amount of physical violence (36%). A slight difference was observed in regard to their exposure to non-physical violence. About half of the 'leaders' stated that they were victims of non-physical violence, while 63% of the followers and 62% of equals experienced non-physical violence.

Self-perception of students

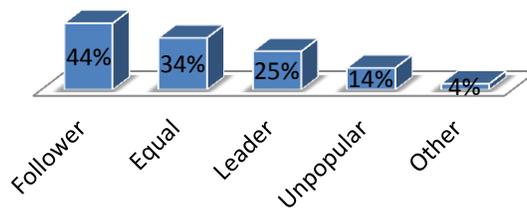


Figure 5: How do you see yourself in relation to your classmates?

Students' profiles, however, appeared to have a greater influence on the way they reacted to violence. 'Leaders' were 37% more prone to react to physical violence with physical violence than followers (25%). In regard to non-physical violence, 'leaders' again showed a greater inclination towards using the same type of violence against their aggressors (48%) than 'followers' (37%). While more boys reacted with physical violence, girls were more likely to respond with non-physical violence. Indeed, among the 'female leaders' that became victims of non-physical violence, 61% reacted with non-physical violence.

Drivers of conflict

Asked to identify the main causes of violence, students mentioned predominantly the need to prove their power (26%), not being listened to (26%), protecting others (24%), revenge (20%), punishment (8%), or punishment of a group (7%) as main reasons for their engagement in violent acts. 15% of the students said that they were not able to control themselves and 5% mentioned that they did not see any other option. Discussions with parents confirmed that children and young adults use both verbal as well as physical violence to express their dissatisfaction. In all the communities visited, violence was perceived as an everyday phenomenon and parents did not appear to take children's violent behaviour seriously.

Drivers of Conflict

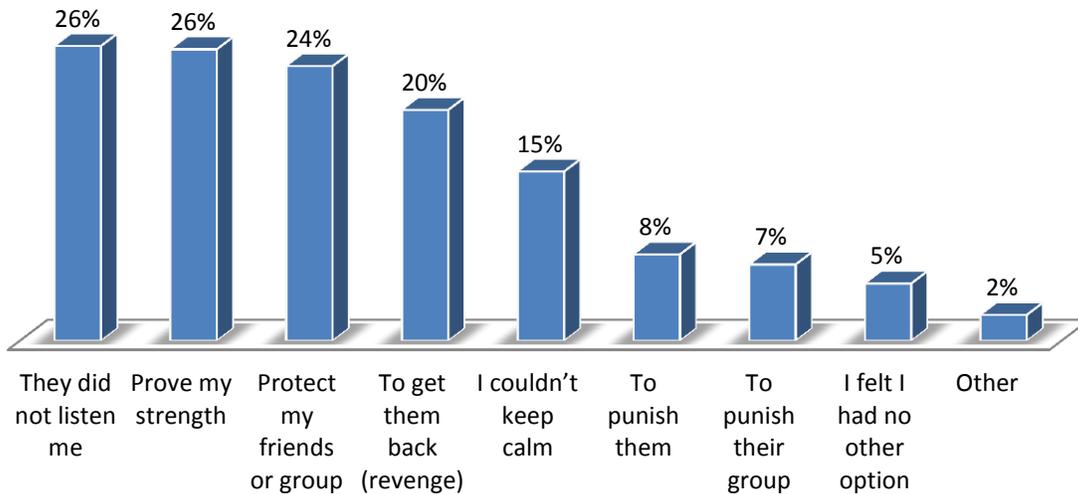


Figure 6: Why did you attack them?

How students deal with violence: reactions

Students' responses indicated they lack formal conflict management skills, relying on their practical ways (violent and non-violent) of dealing with conflict. When feeling attacked either by physical or non-physical violence, 42% of the students reported that their immediate response (in the next 5-10 minutes) included non-physical violence, 14% said they resorted to physical violence and 86% indicated that they responded in a non-violent way. (Note: some students used violent and non-violent methods in their reactions.)

When looking at whether students reacted in the same way as their attackers, the data shows that of those 23% students who were victims of physical violence, 29% responded by physical violence to their attackers, while 41% reacted with non-physical violence. Findings also revealed that 61% of the participants applied non-violent methods when physically attacked. Instead of harming their attackers they tried to understand their feelings and situation, to control themselves, and to talk to their attackers.

For those 72% who were victims of non-physical violence, the findings were similar, showing that 39% reacted with non-physical violence and still 25% reverted to the use of physical violence. Again 61% of the participants also used non-violent methods as a means to deal with conflict.

Reactions to violence

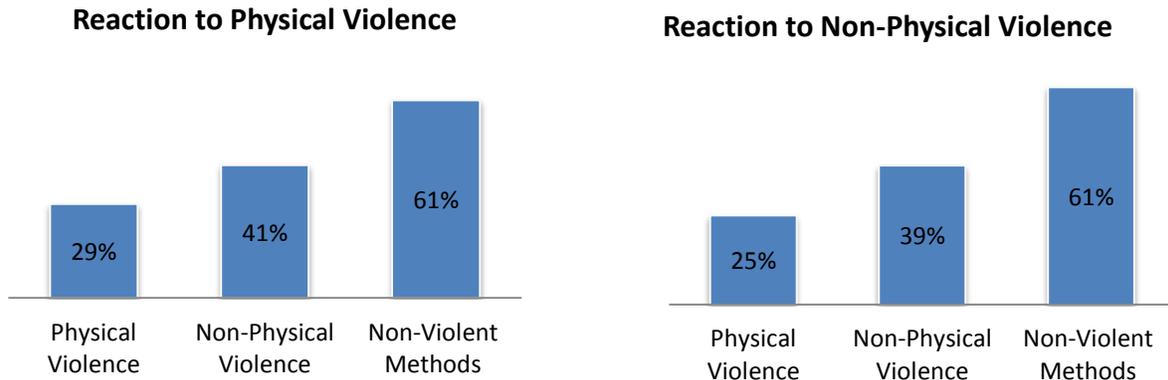


Figure 7: Do victims of physical and non-physical violence respond differently to it?

Students varied in their capacity for dealing with conflict in a non-violent manner. A large number of survey respondents indicated that they reported the case to a teacher or some adult (45%). Almost every second student mentioned that they tried to respect others' feelings (44%) and to understand others' position (30%) when dealing with conflict. However, fewer students were familiar with negotiation (25%) and mediation (22%) skills. Conversations with community members indicated that there are many local conflict management practices. In the Newar community, for example, the so called *Guthi* system¹⁴ is used to resolve conflicts.

Types of reported non-violent reactions to conflict

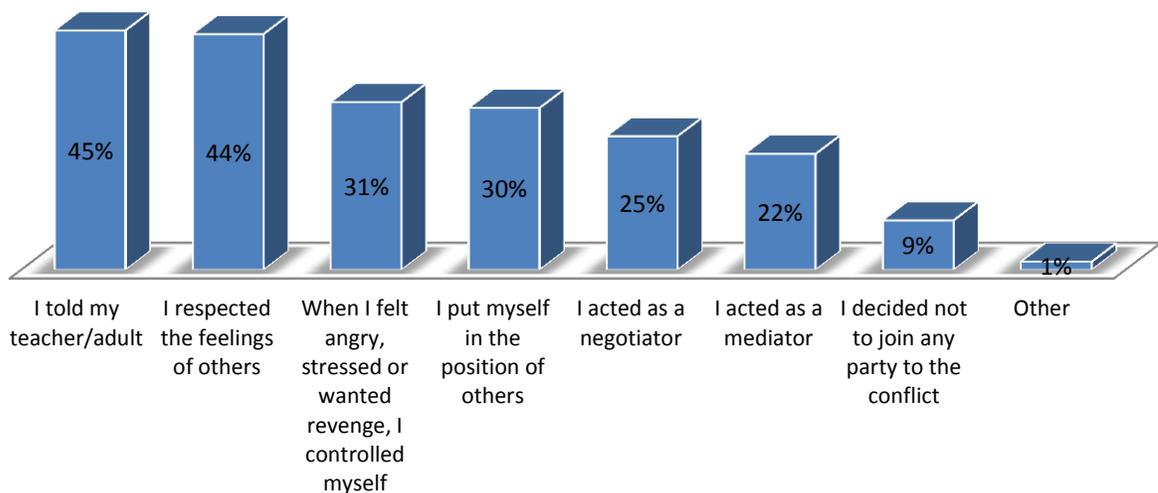


Figure 8: How have you contributed to reduce conflict and tension among people you know?

¹⁴ Guthi is a traditional social institution of the Newar Community that provides support to its members (only families of the same clan can be member) with the organization of all major rituals organized for birth, marriage and death. The head of Guthi also deals with inter-family disputes and acts as arbitrator or mediator to solve conflicts between Guthi members.

Gender perspective

Girls and adolescents in Nepal are exposed to a variety of forms of violence: including sexual exploitation, domestic violence, family abuse, accusations of witchcraft (Boxi) and bonded labour (Kamalari).¹⁵ A recent study revealed a high prevalence of sexual violence against adolescent girls in Nepal and found that almost one in ten girls (9.8%) reported experiencing sexual violence.¹⁶

This study shows that in general, boys were more likely to be victims or perpetrators of physical violence than girls. Twenty-eight per cent of the boys reported being perpetrators, while only 18 % of the girls mentioned the same. At the same time, 28% of the victims of physical violence were male and 18% were female. Only 3% of girls were both victims of physical violence and perpetrators of physical violence, whereas 10% of boys accounted for both.

However, more girls than boys were victims and perpetrators of non-physical violence. 80% of the girls stated that they have been victims of non-physical violence and 74% stated that they have used non-physical violence against others. The line between victim and perpetrator in this case is even less clear: 63% of the girls and 43% of the boys reported both experiencing and perpetrating non-physical violence.

In addition, teachers and parents pointed out that girls and boys have different ways of expressing anger and frustration. While boys mainly expressed their anger and frustrations via physical strength, girls expressed themselves by weeping, shouting and stopping to communicate.

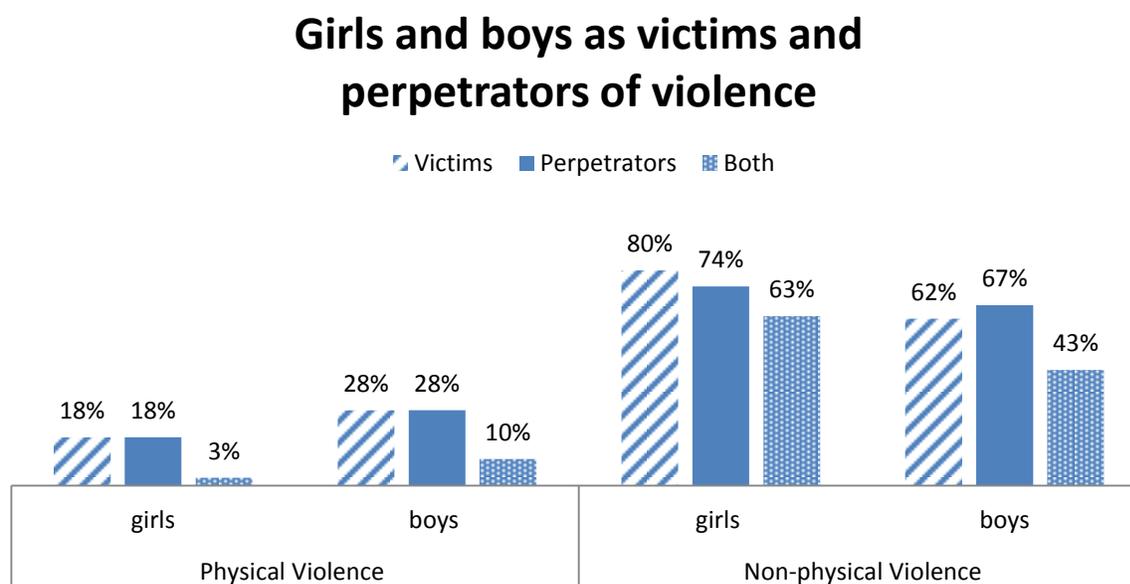


Figure 9: Girls and Boys involved in physical and non-physical violence as victims, perpetrators or both

¹⁵ Hawkes, Sarah (et al.), (2013). Tracking Cases of Gender-Based Violence in Nepal. Individual, institutional, legal and policy analyses, UCL, London.

¹⁶ Shakya, Anjana (et al.), (2012). Sexual Violence Assessment in Seven Districts of Nepal. Himalayan Human Rights Monitors/PPCC.

Learning and teaching environment

Teachers reported that traditional teaching methods and patterns are still prevailing in Nepal's government schools and that student participation is minimal. Some of the teachers said that corporal punishment and other acts against children (e.g. pulling ears or pointing by sticks, screaming, using insulting words such as 'slow' or 'lazy') are still accepted practices in Nepal's schools and used by some teachers as a means to enforce discipline. In addition, classes are often large and noisy: students sit tightly together on uncomfortable benches and engage in a distracting way with their bench neighbours during class.¹⁷

Although teachers cited many improvements since the end of the Maoist insurgency, they still expressed fear and insecurity resulting from a high prevalence of violence in schools. In some schools, teachers confiscated weapons such as knives and swords. Teachers told us that their teaching is often not seriously taken by students and that they are respected neither by children nor by their parents. In addition, because of fear from physically stronger students, they often end up only punishing the weaker ones.

Only a few teachers reported that they have some basic knowledge of conflict management. The subject of peace and disarmament appeared to be relatively new for teachers. Poor access to teacher's guides, textbooks, and training opportunities further contribute to a problematic teaching environment.

Peace education: a highly relevant intervention

Students identified that school education, in particular lessons and activities, has a large influence on their behaviour when dealing with conflict. In addition, teachers, family members and friends can effectively advise and guide children in handling conflict. Students also ranked extracurricular activities, such as organised sports and optional courses, among the top influences for dealing with conflict. In addition, electronic media, such as facebook, mobile usage, TV, radio and the internet in general have an increasing influence on children's knowledge and behaviour. An increasing use of new technologies brings a large potential to reach out to a large number of children and adolescents to actively engage them in peace and disarmament initiatives.

¹⁷ In one government school in Banke district, for example, researchers found 91 students in one class.

Influence on behaviour

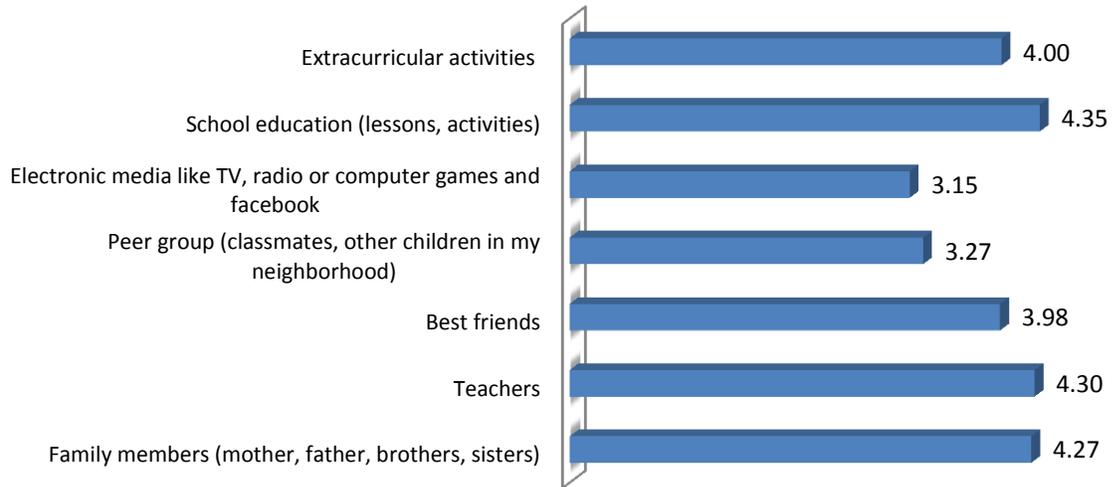


Figure 10: When dealing with conflict, how important were each of these when influencing your behaviour? (Answer each on scale of 1-5, where 1 = least important and 5 = most important)

Conclusion and Recommendations

While violence in Nepal's government schools is still widespread, UNRCPD's study found reasons for optimism about students' behaviour in relation to conflict, as well as some causes of concern. The data mainly shows the pervasiveness of physical and non-physical violence amongst students. Many students were both victims and perpetrators of violence and often knew each other. Students with a leadership profile showed a greater inclination towards the use of violence. Additionally, disputes and conflicts were often not bound to a particular school but interrelated with community disputes.

In terms of the distribution of violence, the survey findings challenge the commonly held belief that the Terai is the most violent area in the country, showing a relatively equal concentration of violence across the five districts. Classroom observations and focus group discussion rather indicated that levels of violence vary between different schools regardless of their district. The school environment in terms of teaching methods, teachers' capacities to deal with diversity and demonstrating respect towards others appears to imply a high influence on the level of violence in schools.

Although the students have developed many different ways to deal with conflict in a non-violent way, these methods are often very arbitrary and used alongside violent methods. The data clearly indicate that students as well as teachers lack proper skills to deal with interpersonal violence. Only about a fourth of the students are familiar with formal negotiation and mediation skills.

The findings confirm that peace and disarmament education is still needed in Nepal's schools and suggest areas for the expansion of UNRCPD's activities. The complexity and extent of violence in schools results from the latent tensions and traditions of violence that originate from armed civil conflict. Promoting non-violent values and skills to deal with conflict among both students and teachers thus continues to be very important. The report suggests that a multi-pronged approach involving teachers, students, and the community is needed to effectively influence children's values, knowledge, skills and behaviour in response to conflict.

Interventions via the curriculum by integrating peace and disarmament contents and materials into Nepal's national curriculum need to be combined with efforts to reach out to teachers exposing them to and training them in peace and disarmament education as well as new teaching methods. As disputes and conflicts are not confined to the school premises, the community needs to be involved in current efforts and new ways should be sought to increase PDE awareness at the community level. Further, as our findings have shown that students with a leader profile are more prone to violence, a possible way to reduce violence could be through tailored leadership training for students. Students also highlighted the relevance of new technologies as a platform to reach out to youth and their communities and promote understanding of peace and disarmament. Such new ways of engagement should be considered when designing new programme activities.

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